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HEARTLINE® TRANSFORMATION: MUSINGS FROM A VISIT WITH DEAR OL' DAD

by Debra J. Hawley

Debra Jean Hawley was first introduced to Hemi-Sync® in 1991 when she purchased a few HUMAN-PLUS® exercises from college professor Barbara Bullard, a TMI professional member. The effects were immediate. Doors opened and many changes took place, including a move from suburban Southern California to a small country town in northern California, where she still makes her home. Debra discovered the Institute in 1995 and immediately felt a sense of being home in the rural setting. The sense of home turned out to be more than just a level of comfort, as she recently discovered that her ancestors were among those who settled in Albemarle County, Virginia, in the early 1600s. Debra has attended the GATEWAY VOYAGE®, LIFELINE®, GUIDELINES®, EXPLORATION 27®, and most recently HEARTLINE in August 2007. She believes her continued work with Hemi-Sync and the wonderful trainers at TMI are primarily responsible for the sense of peace she has come to in her life journey. Debra says, "It's become clear to me that I chose the path of victim to journey to the core of my being. With the assistance, love, and acceptance I've found at TMI, I've been able to shift from victim to healer as I step fully into my continuing life adventure.

"Wow, you look good! You really look good."

My father's words still ring in my ears. Yes, it had been almost a decade since I'd seen him, but the surprise in his voice haunts me. Did he expect me to look old and haggard, as he appears to me, or did he forget my being blessed with good looks? Another option that occurs to me now, as I reflect on the visit, is that I have changed. I've grown into a graceful, elegant woman, one who radiates a peaceful confidence that comes from a full heart. The suspicious voice in me, the one who felt the slight twist in the gut, wonders if his compliment had an ulterior motive. That reaction tells me I still don't feel completely safe around this man, despite his gaunt body and thin white hair.

As I walked into his compact one-bedroom apartment next to the high-voltage electrical towers, I was immediately hit with the stench of cat urine. How is it possible he doesn't notice this smell? I took one final breath of the hot North Hollywood afternoon and closed the door. The room looked much the way I would have expected, the tired and worn sofa an afterthought—does he even have guests?—as the room is primarily occupied by the fifty-inch TV and his oversized desk jam-packed with electronic gear ranging from copious ham radio equipment to a new Mac to items so old their plastic covers have yellowed. After the initial niceties—"Can I offer you something to drink?" "No, thank you, my water is fine"—he says, "I want you to look at this."

He started pulling papers out of a file and presented me with his will and statements from two bank accounts. Wow!... I didn't expect this, though honestly, I don't know what I expected. If someone had told me even ten days ago that I'd be having an afternoon visit with my father, and that I had initiated it, I would have told them they were nuts. I had fully expected him to die without my ever seeing him again. This change of heart can be attributed, quite literally, to attending *HEARTLINE*® at the Monroe Institute just the week before. It's not like I flipped a switch and suddenly all is forgiven. Although much has been, the turnaround is really more about me coming to peace with many aspects of my being, including the incest and psychological abuse of my childhood.

As I looked over the brief and to-the-point legal documents, I felt a mixture of emotions. A part of me felt so sad for this lonely old man, while the flip side said, "Good, you got what you deserve." When he tells me he's got about \$12,000 in his estate for my brother and me to split, I think, "Wow, he really is doing his best to make good by us; in his own way he's trying to make restitution." Yet again I hear the inner rumblings of the angry daughter who wants to lash out and attack. But the good daughter, the nice girl, simply says, "Thank you." It is this aspect of self that knows the monetary amount is irrelevant, money is simply a form of energy, in this case energy that is also a form of peace offering.

Then he asks if he can pass along my contact information to a ham radio friend, the same friend I am to call when it comes time to clear out all his electronic gizmos. He points to the organ against the back wall, something I hadn't even seen until that moment and says, "You can have the organ." In retrospect I am struck by the irony, or play on words of that statement. Even as I write these words I feel the lingering energy imprint of his "organ" in my throat, the first of many inappropriate sexual encounters in my life. Yet again I realize that in the duality of this visit, the organ is one of his prized possessions. I'm reminded of mini-performances I sat through during past visits with him, visits where I felt more like the mother witnessing a child desperate for approval than a daughter attempting to make sense of her life.

I'm amazed that despite the lingering memories of sexual abuse and trauma, I am able to open my heart to this man. During this visit I was actually able to look into his eyes and feel compassion, as well as see remnants of the sweet little boy aspect that had appeared to me in one of the *HEARTLINE* exercises just days before. Even more incredibly, when he confronted me with one of his sociopathic comments, I was able to speak up for myself in a calm, forthright manner.

We'd been fiddling around on his computer, where he showed me some of his favorite video clips. I held my breath as each new file opened, fearing I would be assaulted by porn, but surprisingly they were all lightly humorous, including one hilarious collection of cat antics. How liberating it was to sit and laugh with joy and innocence in this man's presence. It was amazingly healing and at the same time evoked a deep chord of grief. On some level I believe

our souls agreed to the path our lives have taken, and from that awareness I have profound honor and appreciation for this soul who brought me such dark lessons.

The sense that my visit was somehow a clearing for him, too, continued as he pulled out the old picture albums for me to take home: his prized collection of personalized, autographed headshots of actors he had worked with over the years, a few pictures of me and my brother growing up, and the most fascinating, pictures from his own childhood. The only pictures he didn't pass along were those of me and my children—all close to twenty years old. A wave of guilt washed over me as I realized I'd stopped sharing images, so he had simply kept the circa 1980 ones prominently displayed. One of my first to do's when I returned home was to gather some current family photos and pass them on.

As the afternoon wore on, my comfort level decreased. Despite breathing into my heart to find a place of inner peace, only so much fiddling to fill time is tolerable. I was gathering the willpower to say good-bye when he looked at me and said, "I'm sorry about what happened when we were on location." I was stunned. To hear "I'm sorry" come out of his mouth, even if the occasion he chose to be sorry about was one of the lowest in my traumatic-life-event chronology, was a miracle. I had been more affected by the "incest is best" comment made by the logistics director back in 1974 as we checked into a shared hotel room than I was by walking in on him and some woman he had picked up during the movie shoot.

His apology was quickly negated, however. Directly after it came, "But you were in that drug thing." Here I did the heretofore unimaginable. I didn't shut down and pout, but I didn't shift to victim status either. I very calmly said, "There wasn't any drug thing. I have done drugs, but there wasn't any drug thing." My father's reference was to a complete figment of his damaged imagination.

I was twenty-six when the incest memories cracked my world apart. At twenty-nine I confronted him via letter. His twisted way of accepting the accusations was to create a story: I was a drug addict who had concocted the whole abuse scenario to hurt him. Yet on the one occasion when I confronted him in person, he told me he knew his father had sexually abused his sisters, though only one of the two girls ever admitted it. The other died of cervical cancer, which to me speaks as loudly as words. Almost immediately after his admission of the family secret during that visit twenty-plus years ago, he shook from head to toe as though struck by lightning and instantaneously changed the subject. It was as though a time gap had opened and he had slipped midsentence into another conversation. To this day it remains one of the oddest moments I have ever witnessed. So to hear, "I'm sorry," however buffered by his fantasy coping mechanism, is a miracle.

Will I see him again? Who knows! ... He would certainly like that. In fact he called me twice in the twenty-four hours following my visit with seemingly insignificant questions. What I do know

is that I have a new level of internal freedom when I look at the picture of the eleven-year-old boy I have placed on my altar. Even with the strain I see in his eyes, or perhaps as a result of it, I feel a deep love and connection beyond anything I would have imagined possible. The victim self that held tightly to the estrangement and justified resentment has loosened her hold and today I can truly feel love in my healing heart. I have come one step closer to feeling complete and at home within my soul and at peace with my life's journey.

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